

The Dey Mansion
Totowa Road, Lower Preakness
Wayne Township, Passaic County, New Jersey

HABS-NJ-17

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16 PREK
1.

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District of New Jersey

Historic American Buildings Survey
Seymour Williams, A.I.A., District Officer
133 Central Avenue, Rahway, New Jersey

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The Dey Mansion
Totowa Road, Lower Preakness
Wayne Township, Passaic County, New Jersey

Owner: Passaic County Park Commission

Date of Erection: About 1740

Architect:

Builder: Dirck Dey

Present Condition: Good

Number of Stories: Two

Materials of Construction: Foundation - stone

Exterior walls - front wall
brick made on the premises.
All corners have sandstone
quoins from the Little Falls
Quarry. The ends and rear are
built of ordinary rubble of
split quarry and fieldstone to
the eaves; above that the ends
are brick. The walls are laid
up in yellow clay

Interior walls - plaster panel

Floors - wood floors with
unusual wide boards

Roof - gambrel with dormers
added at a later date. These
have been eliminated by C.W.A.
in 1933-'34

N.J.

B. P. M.

Historical Data:

The building was erected by Dirck Dey about 1740. He was a carpenter and from its excellent finish, he must have built it for his own residence.

It is thought that the east wing of the house was the part built by Dirck Dey. He gave this building to his son Colonel Theunis Dey who added the west wing with the 12 foot hall. This place has also been called "Bloomsburg Manor". There are several letters from Esther or Hester Dey, daughter of Colonel Dey, that were thus headed.

The house was used by Washington during July and also during October and November of 1780. Washington was at the Dey House when Count Rochambeau, a commander of the French fleet, with 6,000 men on board arrived at Newport. The American army moved from Breakneck to Paramus and then to Kings Ferry, where the Hudson was crossed.

Washington occupied, it is thought, the four rooms of the original part of the house. His office was in the southeast room. He used the room to the rear of this for dining, except when the official family was with him, then he used the large hall.

Bibliography:

Information from Dr. W.H. Rauchfuss,
local historian and curator of Dey
Mansion

Walter C. Smith
Supervising Historian

Approved:

Seymour Williams
SEYMOUR WILLIAMS, A.T.A.

District Officer Rev. Aug. 20, '35 TFW

A D D E N D A

Dirck Dey, the third generation of the family in America, settled in Preakness as early as 1707. He bought the land upon which this house stands on October 9, 1717. Dirck built the present house about 1740. However, it is possible that he left the completion of the residence to his son Theunis. Dirck was a freeholder of Bergen County and a member of the New Jersey Assembly from 1748 - 1752.

Theunis Dey was born on October 29, 1726. He succeeded his father as owner of the six hundred acre estate. He was a colonel of militia, a member of the New Jersey Assembly and of the New Jersey Provincial Council.

Washington entrusted the supervision of the territory on the west side of the Hudson above New York Bay to Colonel Dey. It is natural that the intimate relation between them should develop into a friendship and that he should consider using the Dey house when in this vicinity. The first record of Washington's presence at the Dey Mansion is established by a letter which he wrote on June 11, 1780. His army was encamped in the vicinity from July 1 to July 29, 1780; during that time Washington used as the headquarters the Dey House. The four rooms on the east side were occupied by the Commander-in-Chief. The southeast room or the parlor on the first floor was his office.

The army moved on to Paramus at the end of July, and from that time until early October, Washington was campaigning in the Hudson Highlands.

It was during this time that Arnold's traitorship was discovered. Major Andre was hanged at Tappan on October 2. In order to make himself more inaccessible, since Sir Henry Clinton was desirous of avenging the death of his Adjutant-General by seizing Washington himself, Washington decided to return to the Passaic Falls vicinity. He arrived there on October 8. The army followed the next day and remained encamped there during October and November.

The house passed to General Richard Dey who disposed of it to the Neafies in 1801. Between 1801 and 1930 when the Passaic County Park Commission obtained possession the house had seventeen owners.

Bibliography:

Bailey, Rosalie Bellows Pre-Revolutionary Dutch Houses and Families in Northern New Jersey and Southern New York New York, William Morrow & Co., 1936

A Brochure titled "Formal Opening and Dedication of the Dey Pension, Washington's Headquarters by the Passaic County Park Commission at Breakneck County Park, Wayne Township, Passaic County, New Jersey, October 8, 1934, 2 P. L."

Walter R. Rife
Supervising Historian

Approved:

Seymour Williams
SEYMOUR WILLIAMS, A.I.A.
District Officer

THU

N.J.

12-100K

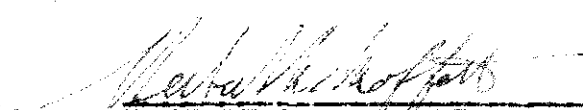
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A D D E N D U M

On its original site as outlined by the old foundations, a kitchen and leanto was erected in 1938. The plans for restoration were made by the late Charles O. Cornelius of New York. He, however, was unable to complete the work and Eggers and Higgins also of New York carried on. The latter were responsible for cutting off the roof space of the kitchen with a plaster ceiling. They also designed the east wall mantel and fireplace which has more in common with New England than the Dutch Colonial of New Jersey. The added leanto seems incongruous and unwarranted by the meager evidence. The impression is that of over elaborateness.

Bibliography:

From architectural notes made by
Lewis D. Cook


HERBERT N. MOFFETT
Deputy District Officer